

AUTOMATED DYNAMIC NEGOTIATION OF ELECTRONIC SERVICE CONTRACTS

ABSTRACT

5 A method for automating contract negotiation between a plurality of parties over a
communications network. The parties communicate and agree upon a negotiation protocol before
commencing the negotiation in a meta contract that is formed to govern or control the negotiation
process. The automatic negotiation may include at least one sub negotiation.
Machine-executable rules are specified to enable an automatic negotiation to take place between
10 servers over a communications network. A successful negotiation may result in the formation of
an electronic commerce contract. Each party may maintain the contract state of the overall
negotiation, which may take place among two or more parties, wherein at least one party may be
represented by a broker. Thus, complex negotiations may be handled automatically by the
inventive method. The negotiation may be conducted semi-automatically to allow for human
15 intervention in the negotiation process.